



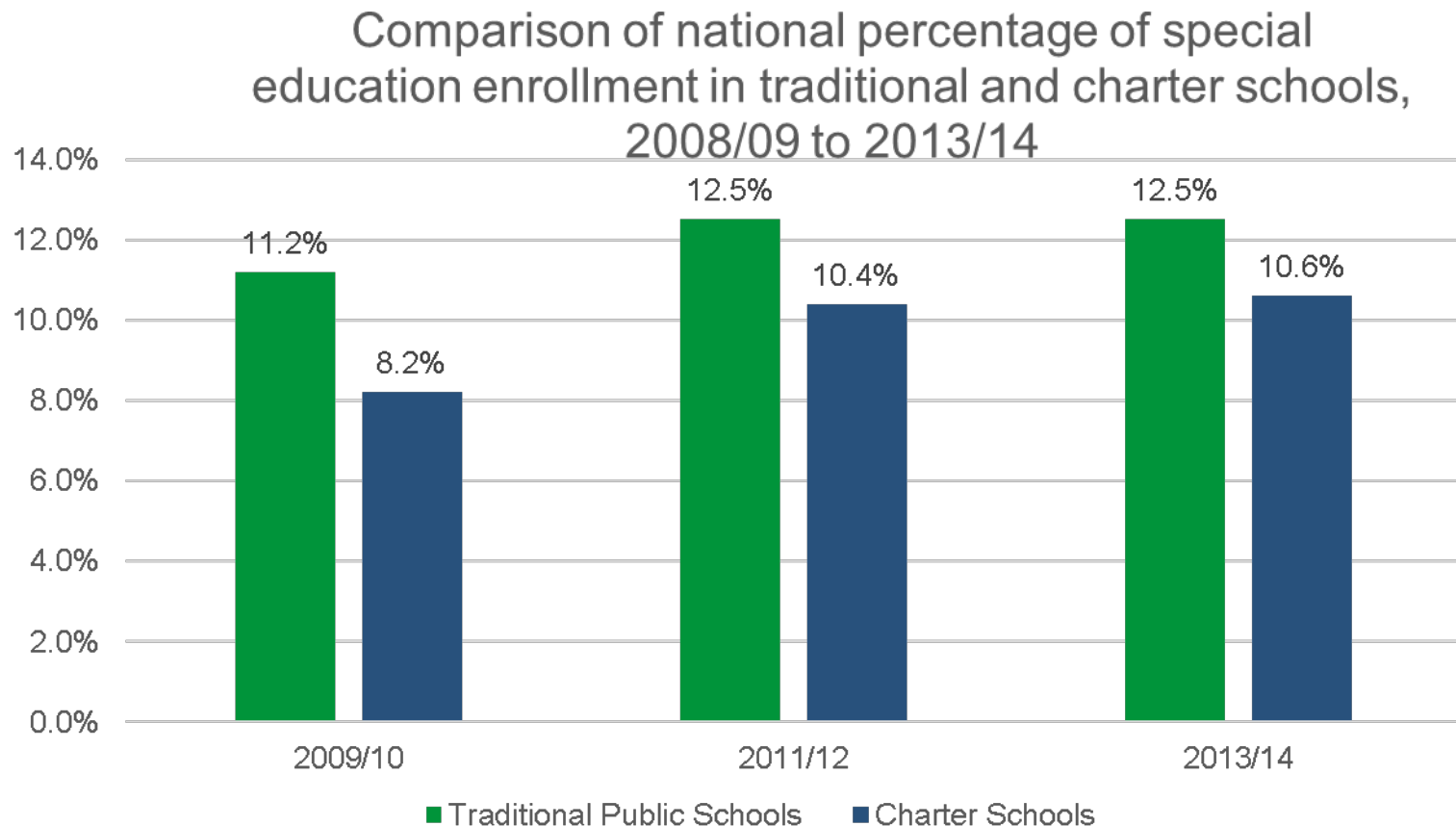
Researcher reflection on applications and implications of the findings

Tessie Bailey, PhD, American Institutes for Research

10/12/18

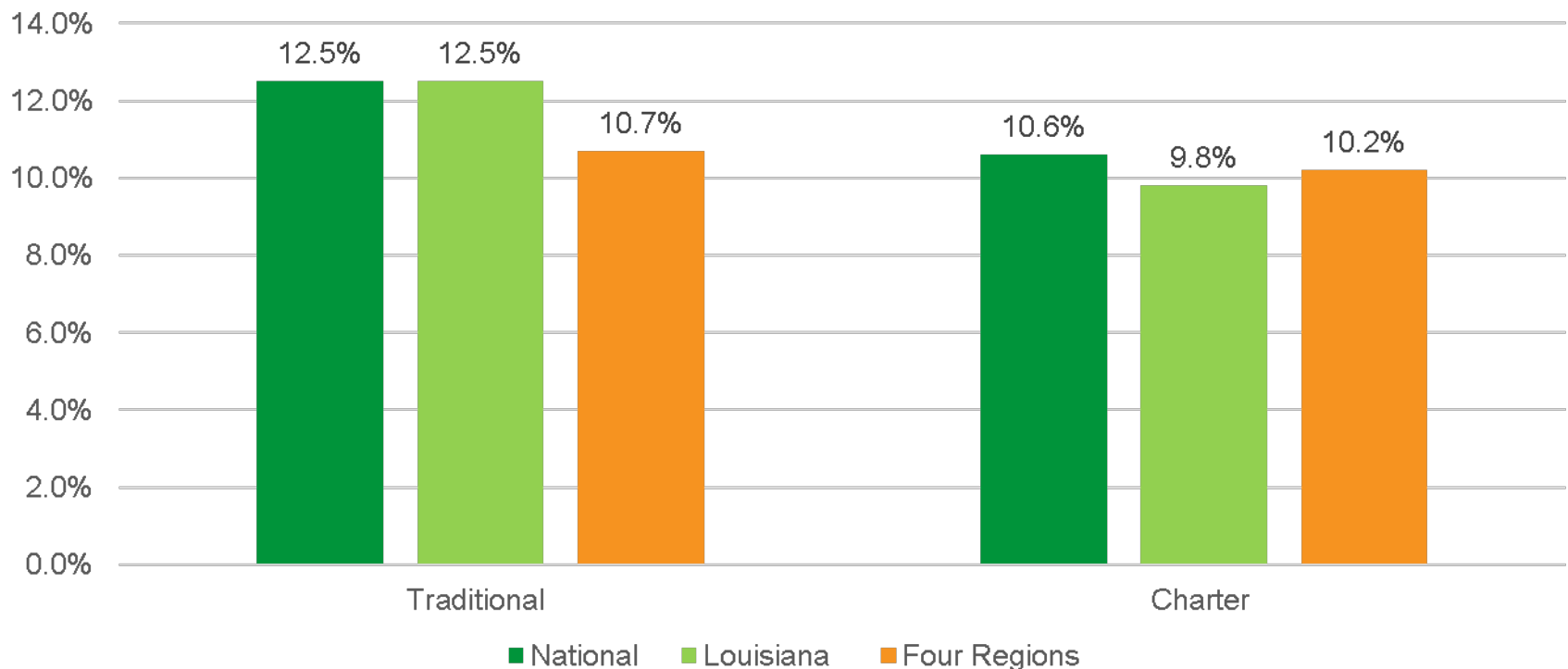


Implications: Closing the enrollment gap between charter and traditional schools is possible.



Implications: Students with disabilities may be underidentified in some regions.

Comparison of national, Louisiana, and four regions percentage of enrollment of students with disabilities (SWDs) in traditional and charter schools, 2013/14



Source: Rhim & Kothari, 2018; Wolf & Lasserre-Cortez, 2018

Implications: Extent of enrollment and gaps may depend on school type and location.

Inequitable access to special education among the regions for traditional (8.4%–14.1%) and charter schools (5.8%–11.2%) suggests **lack of consistent implementation of special education procedures.**

Nationally, charter schools that are their own local education agency enroll a greater proportion of students with disabilities (**11.5%**) compared to charters that are part of a local education agency (**9.74%**). **70%** of Louisiana charter schools are part of a local education agency.

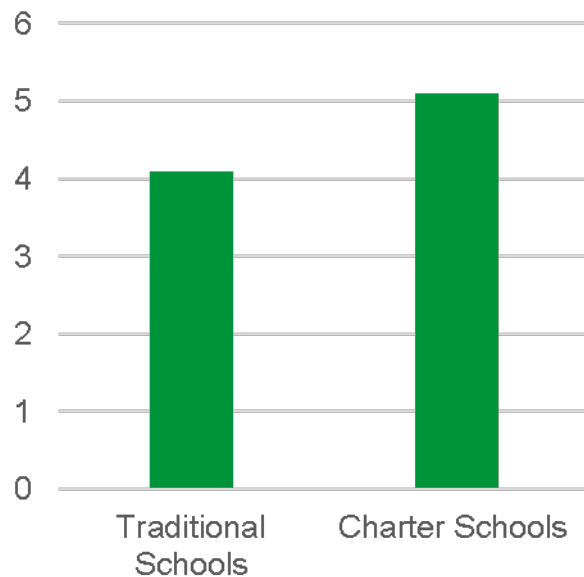
Implication: Closing the gap is important, but ensuring quality access to quality of service is equally important.

Comparison of special education indicators by school type, 2012

	Traditional	Charter
Placement of Students with Disabilities in General Education > 80% of the Day	68.1%	84.3%
Suspension of Students with Disabilities	11.6%	12.3%
Expulsion of Students with Disabilities	0.26%	0.20%

Implication: Charter schools may offer students with emotional disturbance increased opportunities for school success.

National enrollment of students with ED by school type, 2013/14



(Rhim & Kothari, 2018)

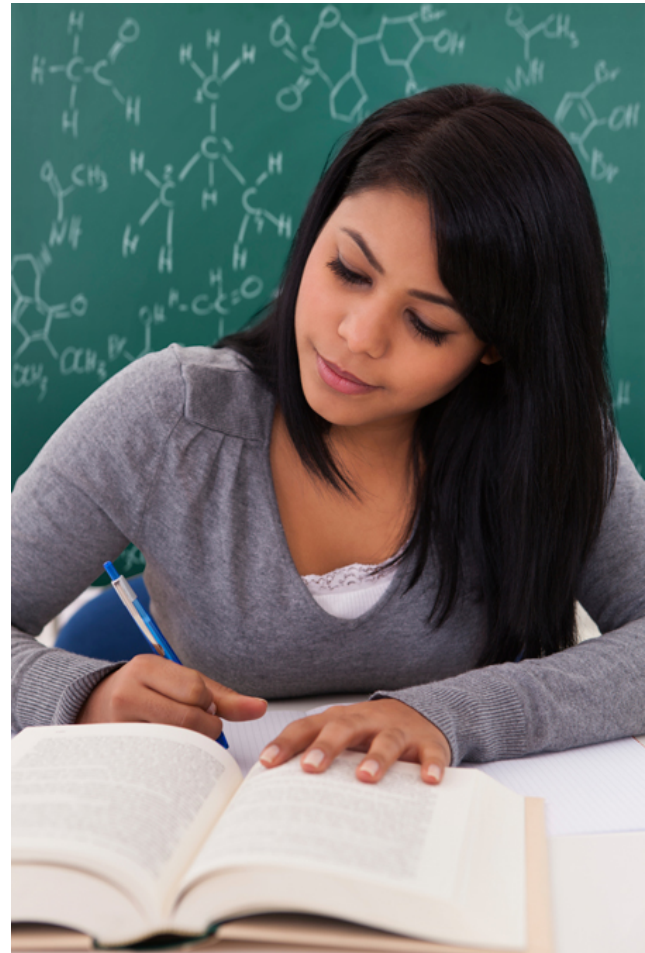
	Students with ED	All SWDs
Graduate	57.6%	69.9%
Dropout	35%*	18%
Participation in General Education	47.1%	62%
Educated in Alternative Environment	17%	5.2%
Out of School Suspended or Expelled**	366*	77

*Highest among all categories. **Out of 10,000.

(U.S. DOE, 2017)

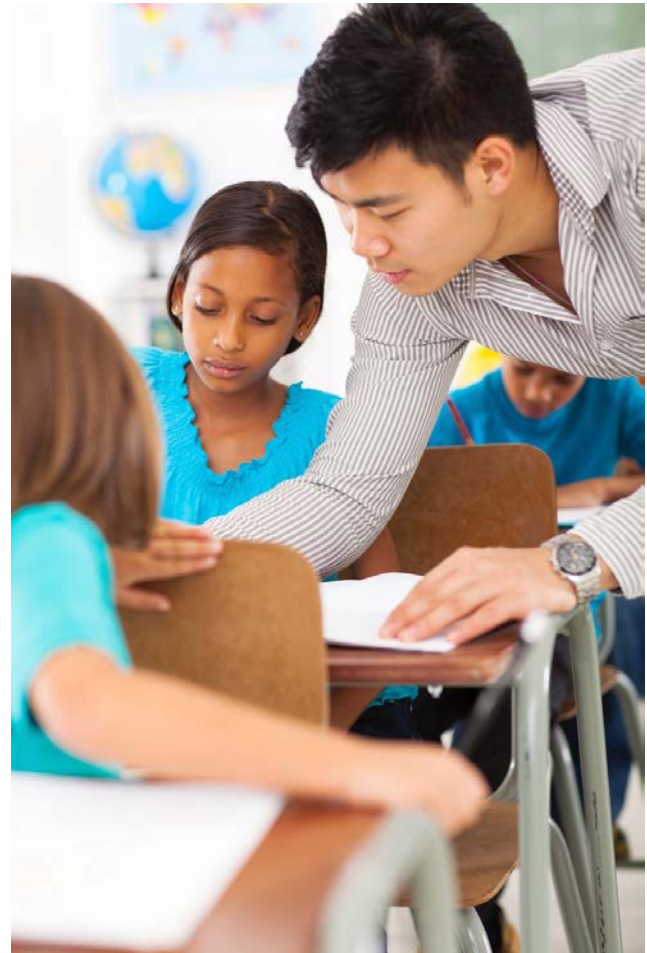
Best practices in supporting students with disabilities

- Implement a **multi-tiered system of support** (MTSS).
- Ensure schools have the **infrastructure necessary** to effectively support a wide range of student needs (for example, qualified staff, resources, specialists).



Best practices in supporting students with disabilities

- Ensure teachers and leaders are **prepared** to support SWDs in school learning environments.
- Value the **diversity** that students with disabilities bring to the learning environment.
- Provide **data-based individualization** to support SWDs, particularly those with the most intensive needs.



Resources to build capacity of educators in charter schools to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities

- CEDAR Center: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/>
- National Center on Intensive Intervention: <https://intensiveintervention.org/>
- IRIS Center: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>
- Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports: <https://www.pbis.org/>

References

Center for Research on Education Outcomes. (2013). *Charter school performance in Louisiana*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University.

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U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs. (2017). *39th annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. Washington, DC: Author.

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Practitioner reflection on applying findings in a charter school setting

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Equal access vs. equitable access

- The challenge for fulfilling the promise of academic achievement in our work with diverse learners has **never been greater than today.**
- Students with disabilities **deserve an education** that prepares them for postsecondary success and a lifetime of unlimited opportunities.
- The findings of this study highlight the differences in special education enrollment and classification in traditional schools and charter schools.

Taking the
"DIS"
out of ability.

Equal access vs. equitable access

Key findings of the study correlate with the state of Louisiana's data, validating that **achievement gaps have persisted over time and cross all disability classifications.**

The large gaps in traditional schools in grades K–5 in New Orleans may possibly be attributed to the number of traditional schools that have special admission requirements vs. a greater number of charter schools that have open admission.

At the upper grade levels (9–12), the reason for the gap is the same.



Equal access vs. equitable access

Uniformly educating students with disabilities historically has been a challenge, as seen in New Orleans public schools, where the majority of schools are charter schools.

According to the study, **charter schools more readily accept students with disabilities as opposed to traditional schools**. However, the acceptance is based more on limited school choices because most of the schools in New Orleans are charter schools.



Equal access vs. equitable access

- **Traditional schools** in New Orleans have **stricter enrollment requirements**. As a result, enrollment of students with disabilities is not necessary altruistic, but more due to the availability of open enrollment schools.
- **Charter schools** accept students without much consideration to the impact on the school budget, preparation of teachers and staff, and understanding of the needs and resources to equitably educate diverse learners.



Equal access vs. equitable access

1. Is the enrollment gap larger for students with disabilities in the earlier or later grades?
2. Do disabilities vary across categories?
 - A. Is it due to the tendency of charter schools to declassify students as requiring an individual education program at a higher rate than traditional schools?



Equal access vs. equitable access

1. Is the enrollment gap larger for students with disabilities in the earlier or later grades?

The enrollment gap is larger for students with disabilities in the early grades for several reasons, such as the following:

- Enrollment criteria.
- Staff preparation.
- Parental understanding of school program offerings.

Equal access vs. equitable access

2. Do disabilities vary across categories?

Disabilities do vary across categories and can be attributed to the following:

- Limited traditional school choices.
- Families' understanding of the school choice programs' offerings.
- Lack of credentialed staff to provide services to students with particular disabilities.

Equal access vs. equitable access

A. Is it due to the tendency of charter schools to declassify students as requiring an individual education program at a higher rate than traditional schools?

It is related to the level of the **traditional school's understanding vs. the charter school's understanding of resources and services required per disability**. Traditional schools usually have a higher number of traditionally trained teachers and staff, as opposed to charter schools that have a lower number of traditionally trained teachers and staff who are not usually as well versed in the Louisiana state bulletins regarding services and evaluations for students with disabilities.

Equal access vs. equality

- Although there are several comparisons between charter schools and traditional schools in the study, **the research gives educators a look at how to better manage provision of a quality education for students with disabilities.**
- Louisiana has developed a funding source to aid schools to better provide an equitable education through a high cost grant. The grant allows schools to use the funds as they choose to ensure an equitable education for their diverse learners.

Conclusion

The study did a good job exploring enrollment gaps, but with its limitations, did not go in depth enough to explain why the gaps existed.

The overall findings of the study presented the uniqueness of serving diverse learners in the state of Louisiana by looking at enrollment, declassification, and cross-category placement in traditional and charter schools.

